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viding for those who really are "impotent poor." In attempting to face that problem now we have an administrative system in the post-office, which renders it possible to fulfil part of this national duty by means of national rather than parochial organization. It is possible, too, to provide for the industrious poor without forcing them to give proof of their destitution and thus exposing them to all the shame of poverty. It is possible to do all this without any relaxation of the strictness with which relief is meted out to those who have fallen into and continued in poverty through idleness or vice. Mr. Booth's scheme, as modified, seems to me to be on the face of it not unwise in theory, and I can only hope that it will be presented in a detailed form and earnestly examined before it is condemned as impossible in practice.

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GERMAN CHARACTER AS REFLECTED IN THE NATIONAL LIFE AND LITERATURE.*

[Theme.—General conception of the nation and the national individuality. Means to a knowledge of the latter.

Development of the subject :

1. The language. Origin of the early German language. (Significance of the law of accent; other innovations.) Development of the language. Law of signification. Stock of words. Later history. Tendencies towards a written language. (Significance of the same.)

2. The mythology. (Relation to mythology in general.) Origin of German mythology. General observations. Three myths. Idea of the runes. Humor in the mythology. Christianity and the Germans. The Reformation. Enlightenment. Atheism.

3. The poetry. (Meaning.) General character: poetry of spiritual struggle; character of this struggle; its insolubility (individuality and subordination in their mutual relations). Effects of this universal characteristic. Details: (a) Form (history of form; struggle for form; its significance as a model). (b)

* This paper is one of a series of character-studies of which Professor Pfeiderer's article in the October number is the first. The series is intended to embrace studies of national character, of character as modified by professional life, and so forth.

Choice of subject-matter. (*c*) Motives ("*zweifel*;" emphasis laid on the "unconscious" element; origin of the characters; history of development and its significance). (*d*) Delineation of the characters. (*e*) Technique (the epic; the drama; the lyric).

4. Choice of heroes. General observations. Arminius. Charlemagne. Barbarossa. Luther. Frederick the Great. Blücher. Theodor Körner. Bismarck. Common features. Influence.

5. The history. The end constantly in view. Internal history. External history. Explanation of the contrast.

6. Art. A national formative art never developed among the Germans. Reasons.

7. National life. German festivals. Christmas and its meaning. German happiness.

8. Other expressions of national life. General observations. Reading in Germany.

9. Relations to other nations. Impression made by the Germans as a nation; as individuals.

10. Foreign opinions. What the Germans were called. Tacitus. The Middle Ages. Montaigne. Voltaire. Madame de Staël. Carlyle. Napoleon. Renan. Taine. The latest generation.

11. Domestic opinions. Earliest times. Humanism. Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The eighteenth century. Klopstock. Lessing. Herder. Goethe. The nineteenth century. Börne. Heine. Romanticism. Political students. Nietzsche. Summary of these opinions.

Conclusion. Necessary rejection of a concise formula for a description of national individuality. National psychology. Prospects.]

THE task of expressing in brief the individuality of even a single person is a difficult one, and the danger is nearly always present either of writing in a stiff, academic fashion, or of falling into caricature. The difficulty is immeasurably increased when an attempt is made to describe within a very small compass the characteristics of a great nation, whose eventful existence has lasted throughout a thousand years. Nevertheless, relying on the indulgence of my readers, I venture to delineate in a brief sketch the character of German national individuality.

The term "nation" conveys the idea of a comparatively large number of tribes, and testifies to an intimate connection between them in the achievement of a common language and literature, in a unity of purpose in religion and politics, as well as in an ethnographical condensation from the standpoint both of outsiders and of members. It is impossible to

go beyond these apparently very weak determining features without doing violence to the actual facts of the case; for the fiction of a common origin for all parts of a nation is destroyed by the admission of foreign elements into it. Nobody will deny to the descendants of Slavic families in the noble and princely German houses their right of membership in the German nation, and only infatuated Chauvinism will dispute as to the same in regard to the Semites in Germany who have been educated in complete accord with German ideas. Less, still, is the conception of nationality coextensive with town-union; the German-American may still be considered a part of the German nation. Finally, community of language is also not a determining feature, though very nearly so. The learned circles of the fifteenth century, who almost forgot the language of the court in their exclusive use of Latin, and those of the eighteenth, among whom German was entirely disused in favor of French, did not therefore cease to be German; a colonist who adopts and grows accustomed to the language of the natives does not take on their nationality. In like manner other attempts will fail which set out to determine by means of a single trait the limits of nationality. It is only from a comparatively large number of criteria—such as those referred to above—that a conclusion can be drawn; and these criteria must be of such a character as to permit the grouping around a permanent national core of a number of elements which, exhibiting the national traits in the decreasing series, effect a gradual transition to other nationalities.

The idea that each nation is characterized by certain peculiarities is an old one, and has been but lightly disputed by a "doctinaire" method on the basis of superficial theories concerning the equality of all men. In Germany Herder, and later Wilhelm von Humboldt especially, tried to grasp the conception of national individuality more clearly. Philologists and historians, as well as philosophers, have made valuable contributions towards the attainment of this end. Ethnology so far has not succeeded in finding a positive scientific foundation for these individualities, and since (as mentioned above) the conception of a nation is not an ethnographical

one (like *race* or *tribe*), a solution of the question must not be expected from this science, although it may render important service in obtaining results.

All evidence affecting the body of the nation under consideration stands at our disposal as a means of obtaining a knowledge of national individuality. The elements of this evidence are essentially the following: language, mythology, poetry, the heroes and representative men set up as such by the nation, the nation's history, and, finally, and least trustworthy of all, domestic and foreign opinion.

The Germans are especially fortunate in the unbroken chain of evidence which they possess, and equally unfortunate in their central position, exposing them as it does to so many influences injurious to their individuality, and making both foreign and domestic opinion partisan, the former through hostile, the latter by friendly, contact. In the former particular the Slavs and Kelts, for example, have the disadvantage of the Germans, while in the latter point the Spaniards are more fortunate than they.

Among these elements language claims the foremost place, because it has the broadest national basis. On the one hand, parts of the nation that have neither an active nor a passive share in the national literature or history contribute towards the development of its language, and on the other hand, foreign influence, although considerable, is less so in this than in any other field.

The German language is the result of the logical development of certain dialectal peculiarities, probably characteristic of the Indo-Germanic stock of languages while still undivided. Wilhelm Scherer in particular attempted to explain these peculiarities according to a national psychology. The most important old-German innovation is the achievement of the law of accents. Up to that time the accent in a word had been *free*,—i.e., in certain uses of the word it fell upon the significant syllable,—the stem; in others, upon the modifying syllable,—the suffix (Greek *μήτηρ*, but *μητρός*); now, without exception, it fell upon the stem. This innovation may undoubtedly be explained psychologically as a strong action of

the logical impulse. That part of the word which gives it its meaning meets with decided preference. In opposition to the constantly changing favor of other languages, an unalterable regulation is carried out in German, which permanently subordinates the syllables of declension to the superior stem-syllables. Another peculiarity is also manifested here. According to the original mode of speech of the Indo-Germanic peoples, preserved by the Greeks and especially by the Hindoos, the *sentence* was the unit of language. The word had to adjust itself to the sentence and to suffer certain changes according to its relation to it. The Germans, however, now make the single *word* the unit. It becomes fixed and retains its form independently of that of the sentence; the so-called "*Sandhi*," the modification of the word through its position in the sentence, is almost entirely neglected by the Germans (in contrast, *e.g.*, to the Greek $\kappa\alpha\theta' \ \delta\lambda\omicron\upsilon$ instead of $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha} \ \delta\lambda\omicron\upsilon$). An individualization of the word is thus achieved by which it henceforth takes up an independent position.

The consequences of this important innovation are to be seen, first of all, in a greater activity in the destruction of neglected endings, reaching its highest point in the English language; second, in the immediate substitution of the principle of pure logic in a sentence for the original one of euphony in phraseology and metre. Pindar shows the perfection of the common Greek principles of language in his hymnal verse, when he neglects the purely logical relations of words in favor of a magnificent harmonious structure of periods, so that he does not hesitate even to break off a strophe in the middle of a word. The alliterative verse of the Edda, again, is merely the culmination of the general Germanic principles of language, since it neglects euphony entirely for the sake of an energetic and effective development of what is significant.

The other innovations in the primitive German language are not equally significant. Still, in the rejection of countless forms preserved in other languages (*e.g.*, the dual, the aorist, and the future) there is reflected a certain restriction to that which is logically necessary,—a utilitarianism in speech, springing from the same source that gave rise to the law of

accent. Outwardly this economy is manifested for the most part in a restriction to two categories: singular and plural but no dual, present and past but no particular time of the future, likewise but few fine distinctions in the past. In conjugation there are two large classes, the "strong" and the "weak" verb; and finally there may be cited in illustration of this point the complete decay of older formations (the present in *mi*, reduplication, etc.).

A similar decisive *bipartition*—a marked characteristic of German individuality from early times to Goethe (who explained all scientific problems on the basis of "polarity,"—*i.e.*, the constant use of antitheses like "expansion and contraction"), or to Bismarck ("friends of the empire, enemies of the empire")—may be recognized in the development of meanings. The German is especially fond of forming new words through the negation of old forms, even where positive expressions for the idea are already in existence ("*unschwer*" instead of "*leicht*"); he enjoys summing up connected conceptions in so-called "twin forms" of an antithetical nature. Two words, originally merely varying shades of an idea, are forced into opposing meanings, and again words having entirely different significations are made useful by means of an approximation in form to existing antitheses (Anglo-Saxon *heofen*: *geofen*).

The wealth of words in a language is determined in three ways,—by the rejection of old forms, the formation of new, and the adoption of foreign ones; the preservation of words that would otherwise be lost may be considered a fourth element, though one of less importance than the others. Preservation and rejection of old material are probably determined first of all by considerations of sound, and not of sense. In contrast to this element the development of new conceptions is characteristic (like *gut* and *übel*, *mild*, *treu*, *Adel*, *Ehe*, *Eid*, *Gott*: *cf.* the introduction to Kluge's "Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache"). This phenomenon testifies to a care in observation, which discovers and names conceptions before unknown; they are usually either of a social or of an ethical nature, the former appearing early among all nations, and the latter developing among the Germans with remarkable

rapidity. An energetic assimilation of foreign words is also noticeable at a very early stage in the history of the language (Latin and Keltic expressions, especially those of an industrial or military nature), a movement continuing throughout the entire history of the German tongue in varying phases.

A decided centripetal tendency rules the German language thus constituted. The disposition is early manifested to develop an harmonious, literary language on the basis of the dialect of an important part of the nation, with the co-operation of the other dialects. In general, the most gifted and the most important tribes (Swabians, Bavarians, also English and Scandinavians) develop a literary language earliest and most clearly, while the other tribes (Low-Germans, Frisians) do so hesitatingly and in an incomplete form. That which is true of the tribes may also be predicated of the epochs; the most brilliant periods come nearest to the ideal of a common national language, built up from the various dialects. These periods—the times of the Hohenstauffens, of the Reformation, and of the revival of Germany, 1740–1870—mark the climax of a literary development as well: in the first instance, of German poetry, in the second, of German prose, and in the third only, of both poetry and prose. The cause for these brilliant periods lies in the fact that in these instances the superior example of certain personalities or tendencies worked in opposition to the too wide-spread individualism in local and personal habit of speech. At the same time the strength of the common language is significant as a symptom of a time of strong national feeling, while the rank growth of foreign expressions in the seventeenth century testifies to national weakness; the disintegration into innumerable dialects and local tendencies is indicative of an epoch of “particularism” of thought.

The history of the development of one language for the entire nation is characteristically German, inasmuch as it was not influenced by a fixed centre as in England, nor even as in France since the time of Richelieu by a central authority, the Academy. The voluntary co-operation of strong guiding personalities is manifested here, as everywhere else, as the

method most conformable to German taste and most productive of fruitful results. (The joint work of Goethe and Schiller represents this great type in a most brilliant form.) It also becomes evident here that a restraint exercised from above in a purely spiritual field is more repulsive to the German nation than to any other; all attempts made by rulers to influence the language in its development were unsuccessful (*e.g.*, the language societies of the seventeenth century, the exertions of Frederick the Great, etc.).

The history of the German language up to the present time is, on the whole, the result of the logical evolution of the peculiarities manifested in the isolation of the early Germans: hence it manifests a remarkable consistency, not seriously impaired by slight variations in particular points (dialect and literary language, introduction of foreign words, and purity of language). The ascendancy of logic over harmony, of significance over beauty, as well as the isolation of the single word and the tendency to bipartite divisions, remained fixed. Various results follow therefrom: (1) In the law of sound: in the stem-syllables the sounds are confined within comparatively narrow limits of variation, while the suffixes constantly shade from one form into another. (2) In the law of declension: the peculiar isolation of the Germanic languages in the midst of related tongues by the transfer of the declension to the stem-syllable (*Vater, Väter*). (3) In syntax: a rich development of conjunctions, a remarkable freedom in construction of sentences, and an arrangement of words frequently lacking in harmony. (4) In the law of meanings: a superabundance of nice distinctions (*e.g.*, *gut, brav, edel, bieder, tüchtig*, etc.). (5) In the formation of words: a characteristic preference of compounds to derivatives, and in this particular the voluntary union of subordinates is found preferable.

The tendency of the German language to fix upon the complicated as the more highly developed idea is worthy of notice as a characteristic peculiarity ("*einfältig*" (silly), "*schlecht*" (bad), which really are synonymes of "*einfach*" (plain), receive fault-finding significations).

In close relationship to language stands mythology. Just

as language is merely the sum of the names of all perceivable things, so mythology is the sum of the names of the secrets suspected, believed, and finally concluded to reside behind these things. In the same way that language is the result of a common national exertion in regard to distinctions among every-day phenomena, mythology may be considered the product of the joint labors of the earliest thinkers and poets in regard to the characteristics of the sublime and the supernatural.

The principles of Germanic mythology are not yet clearly laid down. It is quite certain, however, that the early Germans took a fairly well developed germ of their religion with them from the "cradle of the race," and it seems a characteristic feature that they limited the province of the chief god of the Indo-Germans, the god of heaven (Zeus, Jupiter), to war (Tyr), and subordinated him to the god of irresistible powers of magic, of wisdom, and of the storm—Odin. Here the spiritual element is given the preference over the corporal, just as was found to be the case in the Germanic metre founded on the principle of accent, according to which the light, emphatic syllables were given more force in a sentence than the less accented heavy syllables (which are the most important according to the quantitative principle). It is questionable to what extent the rich development of the old Germanic mythology on northern soil may be utilized for a criticism of the Germanic nature in general. The minute classification of certain orders of supernatural beings, however (giants and dwarfs, goblins, etc.), seems a product of the German stock in general, while the evolution of the new god of physical strength, of thunder, and the god of farmers—Thor—into the chief Scandinavian god is of purely local origin. The genealogical and other relations of the gods, here as everywhere else, are to be attributed rather to learned systematization than to the original national belief. Among the various myths the characteristic ones are those concerning Odin's store of runes, the myth about Walhalla, and that in regard to the end of the world. All three tales have been explained in modern times as modifications of Christian legends; but even were this

theory to be verified,—which does not seem at all probable to me,—still, the very fact of their adoption, and the meaning which they have acquired in the Edda system, would prove their connection with the spirit of the nation. The rune was a most important conception in the old Germanic faith: it signified “the mystery of a thing,” its true essence, described by Kant as “the thing in itself.” Every object and every person possesses a rune; whoever becomes master of it has the thing to which it belongs at his disposal or the person in his power. By dint of long-continued struggles and laborious schemes the highest among the gods has become master of all runes, and hence master of all creatures and things. The deeply significant import of this myth requires no elucidation. Walhalla is the seat of heaven to which the heroes who have fallen in combat are carried by the “battle-maidens.” This conception is common to many mythologies. The significant point in this particular form lies in the circumstance that the dead in Walhalla pursue their existence unchanged, revelling and fighting just as on earth, while the vast crowd of those that have died in other ways vanishes in the gloomy realm of shadows. The great seer, Goethe, in making the bold statement that Nature owed him the continuation of his existence after death, since he had struggled and worked throughout his whole life, gave a most beautiful interpretation to the old Germanic thought. The end of the world means the destruction not only of mankind, but of the gods as well, and is not brought about by the sin of man, as in the Deluge and in the legend of the Last Judgment, but by that of the gods. While it seems natural to the Germans that the world should fall with its rulers, like a company with its commander, still, a god does not cease to be the object of moral criticism. An ethical idealization of the ruling gods is rigidly avoided, for it would prove a hinderance to the free will of independent man. A new, more beautiful life will rise out of the ruins of this world. This idea proves the existence, even in those early times, of the invariable characteristic of German thought,—a union of dissatisfaction with the present and optimistic descriptions of the future.

The religious practices in sacrifice and liturgy present no features of special importance, with the exception of those arising from the conception of the runes (a symbolic use of words or signs). A peculiar disposition to combine humor with the most sublime conceptions is, however, worthy of notice. The divine lords, Odin and Thor, are put into comical situations. Thor especially, like Herakles among the Greeks and the Hindoo Pushan, is a favorite figure for grotesque representation (Hamarsteimt; Hårbardeljöp). A desire to approach the gods in a pleasant and more intimate fashion cannot fail to be recognized here. Connecting old and new again, we may be reminded of Goethe's daring and magnificent humorous representation of deity in the "Ewige Jude" and in "Faust." Certain pictures by Rembrandt may also be remembered in this connection.

There are many indications of an early development among the Germans of a critical attitude towards the gods. Heathen disclaimers of all gods are mentioned early; shameful deeds of the heavenly powers are recorded without displeasure. The ease with which Christianity was introduced among the most advanced tribes—the Franks and, earlier still, the Goths—may perhaps be connected with these facts, while more backward Germans—the Saxons most of all—opposed the new religion stubbornly. Among the Anglo-Saxons, who stood far in advance of the other tribes in civilization, in poetry, as well as in political establishment, a certain *preformation* of Christian maxims cannot but be apparent. A strong assertion of ethical principles, a sentimental weakness, and an elegiac flight from the world, form an active preparation for conversion and train the great missionaries of Germany on English soil. The connection of Bishop Boniface with King Pepin is symbolical of the intimate relations of political and religious power on that soil upon which, in 1648, the principle "*cuius regio, eius et religio*" was to be proclaimed. Furthermore, conversion was accomplished the more easily because the personal, the *human* relations, so to speak, of gods and heroes were of more importance to the Germans than dogmatic definitions. The warrior merely changed his commander.

As soon as it was possible for him to think of Christ as the chief commander of the host of mankind (the old Saxon "Heliand") the affair was accomplished, and he became a faithful servant of the new master. Friendly relations began to develop. Peter, especially, soon inherited the familiar, jocular side of Thor, and humorous legends placed the saints on an intimate, family-like footing with the believer. The relation of the believer to his tutelar saint was throughout merely the common one of a man to his feudal lord, only in a somewhat higher degree, founded not so much on a realistic conception of the religious relation as on a religious conception of the worldly one.

These relations were also of importance in the Reformation. As far as the purely religious conceptions of that movement are concerned, nothing agitates the Germans more than the desire of pope and clergy to force themselves in as indispensable media between the believer and his Lord, for they desire to communicate with Christ directly. This is not merely a form of pride, but for the most part an absolute necessity for the soul. In like manner, the adoration of the Virgin Mary, in Catholic times and countries, bears not so much the extravagant stamp of the Romance peoples as that of heart-felt gratitude towards the mother of God. Compare the paintings of the old German masters.

When Anglo-French "Enlightenment" produced a new phase in religious development, no change was wrought in the desire for a close, personal relation to the heavenly powers. Step by step the Ruler of the world developed from the tender Father of pious Scriverius into the Loving Ruler of devout Brock and the Wise Teacher of warm-hearted Lessing. The otherwise infelicitous poetry of Wildenbruch, pursuing the same line of thought, treats of the mild "Principal." In Germany the cold abstraction of the "*Système de la Nature*" was unanimously rejected, and that asceticism marked by gushing sentimentality and exaggerated humility was looked upon with disgust even in countries holding to the old belief. The unconquerable longing of the Germans for a soulful relation with the Ruling Power and an intimate connection with the

same is testified to by the fact that even the most pronounced atheists could not resist this tendency. Schopenhauer changed love towards God into hatred of the desire for life, but the passionate invectives which he hurled against "cunning nature" are witnesses to a like personal relation towards the latter principle. Hartmann and others transformed "the Unconscious" (*das Unbewusste*) into a being of hatred and enmity, and Nietzsche pursued the "dead God" with personal hate. Heine's much-derided conversion shows how much of the German existed in this Jew: he could not bear to ignore God permanently.

In this sketch of mythological evolution it has been necessary to touch upon poetry repeatedly. Poetry obtains for us a reflection of the national soul more immediately and more clearly than any of the other means at our disposal, since in the majority of its productions, and especially in its most important achievements, it is simply a realization of the ideal world,—the world constantly longed for and sought after by the nation under discussion. In my work on early German poetry ("Die Altgermanische Poesie") I made an attempt to define its isolated position clearly, and finally came to the conclusion that its peculiarity is characterized by the fact that it is the poetry of spiritual combat. The subject of the greatest poems of the Germans—the stories of the gods in the Eddas, Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parsifal, Goethe's Faust—is the struggle for truth, the combat of the soul. The "zwivel," the doubt and dismay, the discord of two souls in one breast, is felt oppressively, and a victory over the enemy in one's own heart is looked upon with utmost satisfaction. Here again the wisest of the Germans may be taken as our interpreter; in his life of Winckelmann, Goethe has glorified harmony, perfection of equilibrium, the felicitous co-operation of all the powers in a soul, as the most sublime spectacle that the world can offer; he has placed antique integrity in sad contrast to the modern condition of spiritual confusion ("*Zerrissenheit*"). The lesson which he taught for the individual, his great teacher, Herder, preached for all mankind; his term humanity ("*Humanität*") signifies the perfected harmony of all powers peculiar

to the nation. In this yearning lies the deepest secret of German character. The German is a thorough "individualist," forced to isolate himself as he isolates the words of his language; compelled to seek a personal relation to his God, making of himself and his God a community within a community; constrained to search within himself for a new solution of ancient and eternal problems. There is no other people among whom there are so many miniature states and tiny sects; no other nation has produced so many "characters," nor so many philosophers and careful speculators. Side by side with the inner necessity for isolation, since all association involves dependence, there exists a deeply-rooted feeling for strength of organization, for carefully-arranged ranks of subordination and well-defined lines of demarcation. An antithetical arrangement, carefully balanced and grouped in two divisions, is pleasing to the genius of the language; the mythology divides divine beings into certain classes; in like manner, the German is not comfortable in solitude. He craves a well-defined relation to the whole of which he is a part; looking upon it—the class, the nation, mankind—as possessing superiority, he wishes to bear towards it the inferior but cordial relation of a faithful vassal to a good lord. The sceptic—Odin, Parsifal, Simplicissimus, Faust, as well as Hamlet and the heroes of the latest Danish poets—is the favorite figure in German poetry, because he is typical of the Germans themselves. The history of the Germans is that of the struggle between these two principles: individualism and subordination. The struggle is an interminable one, because the extremes always come in contact with each other. As soon as subordination in various ranks is fully effected, then the community develops into an individual possessing personal peculiarities. The Prussian state, the Prussian army, the city of Vienna, the Swabian School, are not merely ideas, but living organizations which develop peculiarities far beyond the demands of their purpose and end. The community becomes individual to such an extent that it is almost impossible for outsiders to gain entrance. A greater barrier exists between Bavarians and the Prussian bureaucracy than between Frenchmen and

the English system of officials. And contrariwise, individualism demands subordination. Diogenes, that ancient Greek "character," asked merely that Alexander should not obstruct his sunlight; a German Diogenes would immediately have demanded of Alexander that he should retire into a tub next to him. The individual comes in conflict with his surroundings, since every one feels in duty bound to make a point of showing his distinctive qualities, and for this very reason is hindered as much as possible by the rest in his development of them. Religious sects are proud of the principles peculiar to each, political parties pride themselves on their challenging watchwords, the æsthetic orders on the extreme to which they go. The reconciliation of individualism and community, everywhere secretly longed for, will therefore always remain a beautiful dream, and its realization the constant task of our poetry.

Various circumstances may be traced to this state of affairs: a strong tendency to all kinds of philosophical and didactic poetry, a general inaptitude for the composition of great, unified poems (no German could have accomplished the grace of construction of the "*Divina Commedia*"), and finally alternations between periods characterized by a stubborn, inordinate desire for originality ("Storm and Stress," "Romanticism," the modern spirit), and those of a monotonous uniformity (*Minnesang*), the Anacreontic school, pessimistic sentimentality (*Weltschmerzerei*), as well as oscillations between epochs of comparative local concentration (*e.g.*, the Rhine countries in the Middle Ages, Weimar in the last century) and those in which literary activity is participated in by many, widely-scattered circles (Leipsic, Hamburg, Zurich, etc., in the present).

The history of German literature furnishes the following contributions towards the criticism of national individuality.

In taking up the question of form, the preponderance of logic over euphony must again be considered. This logical predominance is somewhat lessened when poetry and music are brought into a closer relationship (*Minnesang*, ballads, lyric poetry from Hagedorn to Heine), and again stands out

clearly in periods in which poetry is especially independent (illustrated in alliterative poetry, political verse of modern times). Alliteration itself is founded upon the law of accent and logical emphasis; it leads to an unqualified supremacy of the substantive by means of which poetry becomes rhetorical in character, while adjectives, being emotional in quality, fall into decay. Alliteration soon leads to a rigidity of mechanical perfection; in Germany it seems almost to have run its course even before Christian poetry, with its rhyme at the end of the verse, easily supplanted it. Since then, this successor has had quite a uniform history. It is characterized in general by a certain comparatively simple primitive form, easily degenerating into mechanical dulness, and holding almost absolute sway for a comparatively long time (the rhyming couplet of Otfried, the doggerel of the period of the Reformation). Such a period is followed by one of delicate bloom, the result of fertilization from the south (in the twelfth century by the Romance Minnesang, in the seventeenth by the fugitive poetry of the French). The flourishing period is in each case the product of a foreign spirit temporarily infused into German poetry. When, on the contrary, these Epigoni imitated the foreign form merely in outward aspect, like Opitz or Platen, a complete development of true poetry was never accomplished. The forms of lyrical poetry are especially important: the epic is influenced by them, while the drama usually borrows its mould from abroad.

It is eminently in keeping with the German character to fall into a lively dispute concerning principles in which questions of form are discussed (the poetical regulations (*die Tabulatur*) of the Meistersingers; Gottsched's fight against rhyme; that of Voss against the sonnet; Jordan's for the alliterative verse). This circumstance may not improperly be looked upon as an involuntary acknowledgment of the fact that metrical form, at least as far as the artificial poets (*Kunstdichter*) are concerned, is not an absolutely necessary development from the subject itself. German poetry has not developed peculiar poetical forms for itself, like the distich or the sonnet. On the other hand, it may be strongly asserted that the spirit in poetry that

demands an accurate symbolism of form cannot rest content in borrowed moulds (like the French with the Alexandrine metre). For the very reason that form is considered a symbol of matter, it arouses heated discussion (the sonnet is looked upon as antagonistic to a full outpouring of the poetical spirit, while alliteration is in keeping with it). The necessity of complete harmony between subject and form even in impersonal affairs is again manifested in this truth. Voss hated the sonnet as Schopenhauer did the "Unknown." In point of fact, however, the choice of these forms—for in the cases cited a voluntary choice is involved—is symbolic of the public to whom the poetry is addressed, rather than of its matter, for a symbol is only significant as a development from the subject itself through manifest necessity. The sonnet is therefore characteristic of Petrarch, while in Platen's use of it the significant point lies in the fact of his adopting a foreign form. For the public, however, the form is symbolical, for it becomes a pattern for the Germans. In brief, it is representative not of an existing state of affairs, but of a desired end. Klopstock's antique metres indicate the formation of a community desirous of representing the classical spirit on German soil, and the sonnet among the Epigoni signifies the creation of an artificial Italy and an anachronistic Renaissance. Symbolism among the Germans always demands as great significance as that manifested in this case. The coronation of the Russian czar signifies that he *is* what all his ancestors were; that of the German emperor, that he ought to *become* so. The untiring exertions of the Germans, their ethical requirements, as well as the application of these qualifications to existing forms, are all clearly illustrated in this example.

German poetry, in regard to subject-matter, is less naïve than that of other literatures. It strives to be "idealistic" in the literal meaning of the term. Themes and characters permitting of brilliant development are preferred. The people are represented by the prince, and the military order by the captain. For centuries the lower classes are used to fill farcical *rôles* only, as in the Edda and the court pastorals. When the burgher himself comes to be a figure in poetry, he does so

only because he has attained a higher social rank through oppression of the peasant, and by means of this oppression he strives to manifest his increased importance even in poetry (*e.g.*, in "Twelfth-Night" comedies). At a time when the Romance countries had long since discovered the poetry and the humor of poverty (in their humorous romances), only isolated instances of the introduction of the lower classes appeared among the Germans; even then it was merely imitative, and in nearly all cases a supplementary justification for the hero was deemed necessary (*Simplicissimus*, *Käthchen v. Heilbronn*). The strenuous perseverance of social distinctions, sanctioned even by the greatest German poet (*Wilhelm Meister*), is merely a single illustration of the universal law of sharp demarcations and hierarchical subordination.

In regard to motives, the German demands a psychological interest; a necessity not manifested at an equally early period in any other literature. In Dante's poem, *e.g.*, every man possesses a certain quality by which his place in heaven or in hell is determined (this is also true, *mutatis mutandis*, of *Corneille* and *Racine* and even of *La Bruyère*), while the German is interested for the most part in the inner struggle, the contest of the two souls, the "zwîvel" noted above. The struggle either is a development from within, as in the case of the great sceptics *Odin*, *Parsifal*, *Faust*, or is forced upon a person from without. The *Nibelungenlied* teems with such conflicts: *Kriemhild* wavers between sisterly affection and the duty of revenge; *Gunther*, between love for his spouse and fidelity to his friend; *Rüdiger*, a German figure of remarkable truth, is torn by the conflicting duties of visitor and vassal. The great and well-beloved dramatist of the nation more than any one else fell heir to these characters. The *Maid of Orleans* succumbs to the conflict of the simple girl with the divine instrument; *Wallenstein* is constantly agitated by the varying demands of ambition and conscience; *Tell* is compelled to adjust his peace-loving nature to the stern necessity of tyrannicide. *Goethe*, on the other hand, loves to depict this struggle as taking place between two persons. *Götz* and *Weislingen*, *Tasso* and *Antonio*, *Prometheus* and

Epimetheus, are two sides of an individuality made up of a remarkable harmony of opposites developed in Goethe himself. Other poets have represented this conflict in the style of antique fables,—placing a man between two women of contradictory natures, bringing out his own duality of nature in his relations to them (as Wieland and Grillparzer have done). Lessing's favorite theme is the mastery of such contradictions, in which he in turn symbolizes the antithesis in a man and a girl (Minna von Barnhelm, Nathan).

The psychological conflict may, then, be considered the favorite theme of German poetry, not, as in Corneille's "Cid," an intellectual reconciliation of two points of view, but the continuous strife of natural passions. The emphasis laid upon the "unconscious," the involuntary element, that which is striven against in vain, is an especially characteristic feature of Germanic poetry. The idea that man is merely the toy of the powers contending within him, just as was really the case in Germany during the Thirty Years' War, is continually manifested throughout German literature, from one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, Edda songs, in which the betrayed maiden laments her inability to resist temptation, to Goethe's Fischer, "*halb zog es ihn, halb sank er hin*;" from the god Thor proclaiming war against the world in his uncontrollable passion, to the deified power of the "Unconscious" of the pessimistic philosophers. Psychological studies, therefore, make their appearance remarkably early; they are to be found in the last songs of the Edda and pre-eminently in the Icelandic romances. Nearly all of them possess a feature in common: the description of the formation of character. The terrible woman who is the cause of Siegfried's death explains her change from a tender maiden into a fury. German poetry has at all times excelled in the delineation of such development. While Romance poetry recognizes only finished characters, and at its best rises into pathological analysis only, the psychological study pursued in German literature has succeeded in depicting how a tender father, simple and retiring in nature, may develop into the murderer of his daughter (Emilia Galotti), how a peaceful huckster may be changed

into a wild incendiary, the terror of the country-side (Kleist's "Michael Kohlhaas"), or the change from an honorable man to a criminal (Otto Ludwig's "Erbförster"). For this reason the Germans have proved themselves masters in the history of evolution, even in matters outside the realm of poetry. In France (and Italy) the philosophy of history describes merely how types succeed each other according to certain laws (like the cultured type of Vico and the legislative one of Montesquieu). The Germans were the first to understand the changes within the limits of the subject itself, both as far as mankind is concerned (Herder) and for organic creatures in general (Goethe). The Germans are peculiarly adapted for historical investigation (witness Savigny, Jacob Grimm, Niebuhr); for where the historians of other nations, however brilliant, merely look upon a whole train of events, the German directs his attention to the really historical moment, the true turning-point, selecting it as the important phenomenon. They take delight in the investigation of border-lines,—the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, etc.,—since this psychological polarity is of great importance in their own state of constant doubt. Goethe, the greatest intellectual hero of the Germans, manifests most clearly how his conception of nature as constantly oscillating between a state of systole and diastole is a reflection of his own periodic alternations between spiritual calm and confusion. In Lessing, likewise, the fluctuations of his own soul between sociability and retirement are reflected not only in characters like Tellheim and the Dervish, but also in the irregular lines of his work on the education of mankind ("Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts"). In Hegel's philosophy of history this periodic Germanic metamorphosis is made universal.

In the delineation of his characters the German poet by no means denies satisfaction to his desire for personal relations. Epithets not only of praise but of ingratiation (*e.g.*, "the good" so and so) soon make their appearance. Wolfram von Eschenbach takes a most active interest in his personages; Goethe falls in love with Adelheid in "*Götz von Berlichingen*."

The *technique* of German poetry is not one of its strong points; in this respect it is far excelled by the romances. Either the connections between the different parts are too apparent (as in the "artistic epic" and the works of the romanticists), or else the plan is too stiff and regular (Meistersingers, Hebbel). In the field of the epic especially, the art of easy, flowing narrative is peculiar only to south German artists, probably owing to French influence (Hebel, Gottfried, Keller). The German novel, as a whole, cannot be compared to the English, which excels in abundance of incident, nor to the French romance, which is superior in plan. Incident and plan alike are used only as a means to a loose connection of psychological studies. A German romance is successful only when it treats of the development of an individual (Werther, Wilhelm Meister, der Grüne Heinrich); Goethe's "Wahlverwandtschaften" forms the only exception to this rule. Though often rich in felicitous detail, the German novel never forms an harmonious whole. Directly didactic tendencies are of frequent occurrence (romances of the seventeenth century, Ruodlieb, Auerbach, Heyse, Keller). The same principles may be laid down concerning the drama. Psychological study in this field has been developed to wonderful perfection; not dealing with a single figure only (Schiller, Heinrich von Kleist), as is generally the case in the epic; but showing development in two characters (Goethe), or even in a greater number (Lessing). In comedy, however, where characters in a complete state of development are usually dealt with, and, as a rule, in the historical drama also, German poetry has not attained to the height of Molière or the Spanish dramatists, and naturally not to that of Shakespeare. The German poet feels the strength of his individuality as a disadvantage in such a case. He finds it uncongenial to put himself in the place of another nature without the possibility of modifying it to suit his own views. Hence the frequently ridiculous conversion of the evil personages to the opinions of the good author. The Germans are unsurpassed in lyric poetry, the technique of which seems to consist in a naïve attention to the expression of one's own emotions. No other

nation can boast of an equal number of peerless songs, and but few can show even single pieces comparable to the best of the popular songs of Goethe, Eichendorff, Heine, Mörike; even poets of less note have put forth remarkable productions of this character. The lyric poetry of the Germans is pre-eminently of a solitary nature. The sentinel (Lyncæus in the second part of *Faust*), the lonely wanderer (Lenau), the forsaken maiden (Mörike), all give expression to their feelings in song. Chorus lyrics (student songs and songs for a company) do not attain the same degree of perfection, although some of the productions of this kind are remarkably fine, but these are usually rather single parts of a round than true choruses. The German song is very rarely a recital by a single person before an audience (as is the case with Béranger and frequently with Burns). The German lacks adaptability for a performance of this nature. Such a form, besides, is not nearly so well suited to the spirit of the lyric as the mould in use among the Germans; the former has been borrowed from the narration of epic poetry and adapted to the song. (This is clearly to be seen in Béranger's work.)

As a matter of detail, it may be well to mention that Heinzel has most ingeniously interpreted certain forms of very early German poetry and compared them with corresponding Hindoo and Greek poems. The treatment of the refrain in German poetry is also characteristic. It is used preferably in poems of strong action (like the popular poems of Scandinavia, Bürger's "*Lenore*," etc.), in order to make the progress of the narrative marked through the contrast between the part that is constantly changing and the permanent section. Finally, the disposition to play upon words must be noted (early German poetry; the Silesian School, in echoes, etc.; Goethe and Schiller, at times; Lessing, frequently; Freiligrath), which rests upon a belief in the symbolism of language (Jacob Grimm, Novalis).

All parts of the German nation do not take part in its poetry. Especially in the present, unfortunately, there are regions in which a song is never heard, and even more common are the circles to whom all literature is a dead letter

(this was the case in the past also). Another, but fragmentary, form of popular poetry exists, which succeeds in penetrating into these nooks and stirring up interest in the circles referred to above. This particular form is embodied in the *choice of heroes*, a phenomenon of the highest importance in the psychology of nations.

Every nation selects objects of special favor from among its worldly or spiritual leaders. The people idealize them into typical figures on the basis of certain qualities; characteristic anecdotes concerning them are eagerly collected, and their names become proverbial. Such men soon come to be looked upon as representative of the nation, but this must be done only with caution. Like characters in poetry, like symbols in general, they must serve rather as models than as illustrations of existing phenomena. A nation of Napoleons or of Tells never existed, but there was a time when the desire of every Frenchman was to be a Napoleon.

Finished models, already in existence, are instrumental in working the change from an historical personage into an historical hero; for instance, analogy, or contrast to old types, especially mythological ones. Emperor Frederick of Hohenstauffen has qualities of the god Wodan attributed to him; General Wrangel allows himself to be depicted as a little Blücher. Through such influence the historical value of heroes is injured; although they can then be used as illustrations of the time only with great caution, they are so much the more valuable as a key to phenomena lasting through several epochs.

Leaving aside the question how far historical personages may be recognized in the characters of very early poetry (as claimed by the euhemeristic conceptions of Odin and others), the first national hero that we meet with is Arminius, the conqueror of Teutoburg Forest. Tacitus tells us expressly that he had long been celebrated in songs. If we suppose that the Roman historian allowed himself to be influenced in his narrative by German accounts,—and the internal evidence of the “Germania” would probably justify us in this supposition,—Arminius became a typical figure very soon. He is a true leader,

brave, crafty, and ambitious,—somewhat as we picture to ourselves an Indian chief waging a just war against invaders,—standing in the midst of his family like Winkelried, who rushed on the spears of the Austrians, exclaiming, “Take care of my wife and children!” Although the parallels drawn between the historical Armin and the mythical Siegfried do not show that the deliverer of the nation lives on in the national epic, still they may serve as proof that the people soon borrowed and applied to their favorite certain attractive features of the myth. Through his own ambition and that of others he falls a victim to German disunion. The calm patience of the people during the period of carefully-planned inaction, their delight in their hero’s sudden outburst (“Zieten aus dem Busch,” Blücher), their mating him with Thusnelda, are all illustrations of German character. Arminius is a thoroughly individual figure; his death, alas! was to become typical.

Charlemagne is a favorite personification among the Germans of the righteous judge; the French, however, soon claimed him for their own. The Middle Ages produced innumerable minor heroes, mostly kings and warriors. Barbarossa was the first one of them to become a hero of national importance, and even he is slow in taking such rank. He makes an ideal imperial figure, in which qualities of both great emperors, Frederick I. and Frederick II., are combined; he stands in contrast to Arminius—just as the “twilight of the gods” is the companion-piece to creation—as the national deliverer of the future, still a captive biding his time until, breaking his chains, he may show himself in his might and found a new kingdom. In him is embodied the German virtue of patient preparation for a deed, which is so wonderfully combined with the impatience of hope.

We do not meet with a national hero of the first rank again until Luther. A warrior in a spiritual cause, he finally achieved truth after a period of serious doubt, but even later he was not spared inner struggles. The German people see him also in the midst of his family, devoted to music, conversing and taking counsel with his friends. They behold him in other situations as well: in the Reichstag at Worms, boldly stepping

forth, an individual against a great number; on the Wartburg, engaged in solitary labors, not retiring before the devil. The historical picture may be clearly discerned in the popular conception. The passionateness of the great man, his stubborn one-sidedness, as well as his defiance in combat, his humor, his conscious strength, his humility towards God, are all embraced in the national picture of Luther. How far removed is this intensely vigorous, unusual figure from the abstract and conventional types to which the heroes of Romance nations—Dante or Savonarola—were reduced!

Next, Frederick the Great,—an invincible warrior one against many, like Luther; full of humor, possessing many of the national qualities, surrounded by faithful followers, like Luther. On the other hand, a righteous judge (*e.g.*, the incident of the mill of Sanssouci), like Charlemagne; a solitary recluse in his old age. The people are acquainted with many of his characteristics. The snuff-stained vest, the crutch, the crooked little hat, all help to make up the idea of him; but very many essentials are wanting in this picture. In the popular mind Luther is represented in his entirety, while of Rheinsberg, of Voltaire, of the moods and the despair of the king, of his magnificent work as a colonizer, of his exertions towards bringing about the unity of the empire, there is no record in the popular imagination.

The hero of the war of liberation is Blücher: old, bearded, gruff, in conscious contrast to "scribblers," misusing the German language in a high-handed fashion (like Frederick the Great),—in every way the typical cavalry general, just as Kleist has described him in the character of Kottwitz in his "Prinz von Homburg." He, too, is full of humor and obstinacy, and has his faithful comrades (Gneisenau). Next him, though belonging to a somewhat narrower circle, Theodor Körner, the beautiful singer and hero who died for his country, succumbing to superior strength.

Our great poets have not come to be national heroes in this sense. Neither Lessing nor Goethe forms a part of the active contemplation of the whole nation like Luther or Blücher; even Schiller exists in the national thought merely as an ab-

stract figure, the pale, lifeless author of his works, without any details to fill out the picture. The people do not see him in any particular situation. At best, it might be said that the Goethe-Schiller group forms a part of the popular conception; but here, too, there would be danger of over-estimation. To persons of culture, naturally, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, and, it may be, even Kant and Alexander von Humboldt, and a few others, are living conceptions. This fact, however significant as far as the state of our culture is concerned, is of no value in a judgment of the national character.

The only truly popular hero of modern times is, unquestionably, Bismarck. Kaiser Wilhelm and Moltke are looked up to with pious gratitude; the first Chancellor alone has awakened an intense interest, which seizes eagerly upon minute characteristics, sayings, and anecdotes concerning the man. Though far outshining Blücher in originality, he bears many points of resemblance to the latter: his decided rejection of theorists; his grim humor; his comfortable habit of drinking; his long pipe; his outward appearance in general; his sturdy figure and white moustache. He, too, is a good father, but this side receives but little attention from the people. It is doubtless true that popular imagination in our time, which is so poor in power of artistic creation, is much influenced by the formative art. Rauch and Menzel founded their idea of Frederick the Great on the popular conception, just as Ritschl and Spangenburg did that of Luther; while to-day, on the contrary, artists like Lenbach, monuments, and photographs aid in forming the national idea, since now likenesses are distributed so much faster as well as farther by means of newspapers, oil-paintings, plaques, and even cups. In spite of all this, however, certain situations are ever present to the nation. They see Bismarck alone, walking or on horseback, gazing thoughtfully before him; they think of him side by side with Napoleon after Sedan; in the midst of his great comrades in the victorious entry. It matters little whether the people dictate the characteristic moment to the artist or whether they borrow it from him, so long as the hero is shown in a significant situation. The Bismarck of popular concep-

tion, however, is not the whole Bismarck. The people fail altogether to recognize the diplomat, the man of passionate argument, the good, practical farmer. His figure is seen only in high relief like that of Frederick the Great, not completely rounded like that of Luther.

In looking over this short list of the most important national heroes of Germany,—to which Joseph II. of Austria might be added,—the recurrence of certain characteristics is remarkable. It is always the warrior who is interesting, whether battling with arms, words, or schemes, and pre-eminently so when facing a superior power. The people do not like to leave him in complete solitude, like Napoleon, or Nelson,—Blücher's English counterpart,—or like Dante or Garibaldi. A true wife is placed beside him, faithful friends and vassals surround him, giving expression to the personal interest of the Germans, and taking a part like that of the chorus in classical tragedy. Nearly all these figures are beheld in varying situations, characterized either by solitude or by enthusiastically affectionate surroundings, just as Lessing and Goethe and the traditional Frederick alternated between these modes of existence. German heroes are not considered in pairs, a method so congenial to French love of symmetry (Corneille and Racine). Blücher and Gneisenau are not placed next one another as equals; the hero leads, and his trusty friend follows him at a long interval. Furthermore, the German nation loves a wealth of individual and eccentric characteristics: the king's crutch, Bismarck's slouch hat, form an essential part of the picture. The nation delights in humor, in stern repulse of theoretical deliberation, and again in certain details, almost mechanical in character, like the snuff and pipe; the Germans never find it at all congenial to idealize their heroes into incomprehensibility. The Alsatian Kléber, in pronouncing that hyperbole of hyperboles to Napoleon, "General, you are as great as the world!" spoke to a hero of the *French* nation. The German heroes are not abstractions, but vigorous personalities. It is perfectly immaterial to a Romance people whether a square be named Piazza Cavour or Piazza dell' Indipendenza, whether the name of a street be Rue Colbert or Rue du Com-

merce ; abstractions are so much alive to them, and personalities so abstract, that they shade into one another imperceptibly. In Germany a street would never be called Concord Street ; even Peace Avenue (Friedensallee)—although the usual guardian angel makes the idea clearer by means of a palm—is formed after a French model. But a square, a ship, or a child, in being christened Bismarck, is dedicated not to an abstraction but to the living image of a complete personality overcoming inner contradictions by humor and activity. The German is thus an idealist in his hero-worship, but at the same time thoroughly realistic in his conception of a hero.

This feature of German character is not an altogether good one. The Germans have not unjustly been reproached with the fact that their treachery is often as remarkable as their good faith. Arminius was forsaken, the aging Prussian king saw popular approval vanish like smoke, and Bismarck was also left in the lurch by it. The relation between hero and people is a warm, personal one, and therefore subject to depressions unknown to the more abstract attachment of the admirers of Napoleon or Byron, of Gladstone or Disraeli. The hero must daily earn the love of the people anew. If even a god was not safe from criticism, as shown in the Edda, how could a hero possibly expect to be so privileged ? The fashion of a persistently uncritical hero-worship, like that lately imported from England (Carlyle) and from France, which was tried on Richard Wagner and Bismarck, is thoroughly un-German and out of keeping with the national character. The German nation has always taken pleasure in applying honest tests to its heroes ; it may, perhaps, have loved their very weaknesses, but it has never sought to deny that such exist ; and when the great Frederick receives a sharp answer, according to the anecdote, the people, far from growing indignant, are highly delighted.

From the facts brought out in the above discussion, the history of the German people may be deduced *a priori*. Two important elements make up the national life : a positive one of energetic ambition, of untiring national spirit, and a negative one of a never-ending conflict between individuality and

subordination. The great mind of the people is constantly, but by no means feverishly, active. The nation learns eagerly from its Romance neighbors, becomes piously absorbed in Christian doctrine, seizes upon the idea of the *imperium* with delight; with deep earnestness is the eradication of old evils undertaken; new forms of religious devotion, of art and poetry, of music, of science, are eagerly sought after, in order that sore temptation may be withstood through ceaseless activity. The nation listens breathlessly to the words of its great poets, and is thrilled with the task of recreating the empire. In advance of all others it seizes zealously upon any task set by time for mankind to do. The imperfections of the Church are recognized and the problem of their removal is solved most thoroughly by this people. Enlightenment, coming from England, spreads over France, but it is not until its appearance in Germany that it becomes the subject of practical legislation and an agent in active life. The Roman Empire lay dead, and the whole world was filled with the pestilential exhalations of the huge, decaying body. German hosts helped to clear the air, and the Middle Ages arose on the purified soil. The new world in its virgin strength demanded colonists from the old. Germans emigrated to America in vast numbers, and, aided by the inhabitants of similar stock, formed a new nationality. Every new science draws recruits from Germany while other nations still hesitate to give it its approval, as clearly manifested in the beginning of the century in the support of the new historical and philological methods. Every great poetical movement meets with sympathy,—Minnesang, Humanism, the *estilo culto* (which is merely the desire to enrich the poetical world with individual gems), Realism. There is no other nation so just to foreign talent; foreign heroes are honored, foreign literatures studied, and foreign records collected. Among no other people do fiercer struggles in a spiritual cause take place. Since Byzantine days there has been no such contest in behalf of the unattainable as that waged by those of evangelistic inclination for details of dogma. The violence of learned polemics among the Germans is notorious. It is a community of *in-*

dividuals that is always affected, and therefore in every case the man feels himself attacked personally. Lessing unsheathed his sharp sword in battle for spiritual treasures; a question of principle—that of the professorial oath at Göttingen—roused all Germany. This would be scarcely understood outside of Germany. It is because the German, though easily yielding in externals, considers his inner conviction his greatest treasure and will not subordinate it to any power. “My house is my castle,” says the Englishman, while the German asserts, “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott.” His God to whom he, with a few associates, has confided himself, his idealism, his faith, his individual conception of the world, or of a passage of Horace, are all equally unassailable. When attacked on all sides he retires into himself, and from the vantage-ground of his individuality again conquers the world.

This truth is illustrated in the glorious internal history of the nation, richer than any other—with the possible exception of the Italian—in heroes and in valiant deeds, and its external history is scarcely to be matched in point of sadness with that of any other nation (again the Italians may possibly form an exception). It is characterized by the conflict of brothers in the migrations of the nations, in the Thirty Years’ War, in 1866. It is characterized by the sacrifice of many thousands for ends afterwards abandoned,—the supreme right of investiture, the subordination of Italy. We see the war of princes against the emperor, of cities against the nobility, maltreatment of the peasants by the nobility, of citizens by the petty princes, the largest empire of the world subjected to the scorn of the nations for centuries, the noblest of peoples harassed by petty tyrants. What are the reasons for such phenomena? A love of firm organization, ominous in its strength, is characteristic of the German; affairs of personal interest are of too much consequence to him, and abstract matters lack importance, for he is an idealist in *feeling*,—not, like the Romance nations, in *conception*. The sharp line of demarcation between “of us” and “not of us” finds daily application, while the conception of nationality remains without realization; this attitude is explanatory of the strife among brothers. Again,

sacrifice for the sake of a principle is natural to the German, because principle is considered a part of the *ego*. The defenceless condition of Germany for centuries was due to the fact that the various tribes and ranks were unable to subordinate their individuality to a common whole; the people were abused by petty lords because no one ventured to step out of his province,—that of an inferior. Prejudiced by his own individuality, the Prussian beheld in the Austrian merely the non-Prussian; the Guelph seemed to the Staufer only the adversary of his own great idea; in the emperor the prince beheld the power threatening his splendor; and in his extortioner the citizen found nothing but the master set over him. Werther, Faust, Hölderlin, Lenau, alike turn to God, complaining bitterly and petitioning to be released from the restraint and the curse of their individuality, desiring to be absorbed in the whole. Absorption in the nation is likewise the ardent but ungratified desire of all its members. They appear to be nearer than ever to their goal at present; a great movement has bespoken the advent of the new epoch prophesied in the Edda. It is most earnestly to be hoped that all the separate forces of the nation may finally unite to produce a perfect harmony.

If we leave foreign talents out of the discussion, it may be asserted that art never reached such a state of development among the Germans that it could be of use as a means of judging the national character, as has been the case with poetry and history. The fault lies in the lack of patrons; for Germany never possessed a true aristocracy, since nothing between the humblest and the highest station could be tolerated; an atmosphere favorable in every particular has always been wanting. German art is in every case merely part of the art of the period, characteristic of the same, but scarcely of the nation. Early German art and modern German music perhaps form exceptions to this rule. Still, Dürer and Sebastian Bach are representative rather of Protestantism than of Germany, and their fellow-artists, Holbein and Händel, succeeded in finding a new home in England, the other stronghold of Protestantism. Art cannot be characteristic of a nation unless it has been

qualified for an expression of the national temperament by a course of long and careful development. The early art of Greece was not national in the sense in which this term is applied to the time of Pericles, for it was still too dependent on foreign models. The formative art of Germany never rose above this grade: the individual obstinacy of artists prevented the development of a fixed tradition which would gradually raise theme and conception, color and drawing, to a high state of perfection. In consequence, Germany has had single painters of great talent, but the Schlüters, Corneliuses, Menzels, Böcklins, though they may be looked upon as fitting representatives of Germanism, are, as far as German art is concerned, not pinnacles of greatness, but rather isolated boulders. Artists of mediocre talent only, form schools (like Düsseldorf; Piloty). The fact that a broad, national, flourishing period of art never existed, such as those of Italy, Holland, France, and England, is in itself sufficiently characteristic. It is a proof of the defiantly independent attitude of the nation. Every one wishes to be a Prometheus and form men in his own image, even though another model be far preferable. It is likewise indicative of an underestimation of outward form, which failed to win for art, even in a flourishing period, patrons like those of other countries, and of a restless energy always commencing anew and permitting the whole history of art to be lived through again in the life of every painter of importance.

The conclusions reached here concerning art are equally true for other forms of national life: owing to the nature of the people, and in part to unfavorable outward circumstances, these forms have not developed freely enough to warrant conclusions to be drawn from them as to national character. This fact holds good even of the national life. Checked by unfavorable climatic circumstances, it has been still further limited since the seventeenth century by the inordinate desire manifested of asserting governmental authority. Still more evil is wrought by an obstacle lying in the nature of the people,—a certain intolerance, or at least a want of tact in entering into the feelings of others. How frequently the child on the street is heard to say, “I am not going to play with you any more”!

No great event is commemorated without the formation of separate leagues; no celebration takes place without unfriendly demonstrations. National participation in an event—like the interest in the University races in England—is inconceivable. Genuine popular festivals are possible only in Switzerland, and perchance in those parts of southern Germany open to Romance influence,—the same regions in which true storytellers are to be found,—and also in Vienna, influenced as it is by the many foreign elements in its composition. Through the absence of a feeling of personal confidence, and frequently in spite of its presence, an uneasy reserve tends to thwart the avowed purpose of informal gatherings of congenial spirits,—namely, the absorption of individual thought and temperament into the prevailing spirit. Great events, it is true, have succeeded in producing genuine demonstrations, general in their nature,—the Sedan festival in the first years of its establishment, some celebrations in honor of the emperor, etc.,—but traditions of this nature have always failed of permanence. Christmas is the national festival of the Germans; people greet one another, without distinction, in an exalted holiday mood; but the celebration itself is divided up and clusters round thousands of Christmas-trees. Nevertheless, it is a peerless holiday, made beautiful by a delight in giving and receiving common to rich and poor alike. The long and careful deliberation, the well-planned surprise, the pleasant air of mystery surrounding the days preceding the festival, the delight in the cosy room decorated for the occasion while a snow-storm beats unheeded against the window-pane, are some of the pleasing features of the celebration. This holiday may, then, be considered a symbol of German happiness in general: the simple joys of the family circle, the pleasures of giving and receiving, and the thought of the highly venerable origin of the festival. German felicity may be limited in its nature, but, in compensation, it is a home product; unassuming in character, it is deeply penetrated by a feeling of duty and has been consecrated by the serious thoughts devoted to it. Similar conclusions might be deduced from many of the phenomena considered in folk-lore (a method established by Germans like

Möser in the last century and Riehl in the present one), from the dress of the Germans, their style of living, of eating, and especially of drinking, their sociability and manner of entertainment, their love of travel, their choice and use of favorite books. This investigation would, however, lead us too far, without bringing out any essentially new points. An inner contradiction in existing phenomena asserts itself repeatedly. The German considers it of great importance to be master in his own house, nevertheless he prefers to rent his dwelling, while in England even the poor man endeavors to own his home. He favors large gatherings and enjoys little circles in their midst. Few nations, perhaps none, possess a finer literature, and no civilized country has worse readers; their reading is inattentive, unfeeling, hasty, and without discrimination. Statistics of the dissemination of literature would set forth disgraceful facts. Still, there is a good side to this state of affairs. The German does not read the national classics, as every Frenchman and Englishman does, because details seem unimportant to him in comparison to the whole. He is conscious of so intimate an acquaintance with Schiller that he considers a more thorough knowledge of his works superfluous. At the same time, nowhere else can there be found so devoted and so absorbing an interest in great writers and so pious a penetration into the minds and souls of men of genius. Warmth of partisanship frequently leads to almost ridiculous hostility towards the opponents of great men. No other member of the German nation was attacked so violently from all sides as Chief Pastor Goeze, for, although it might have been supposed that Lessing had provided sufficiently for his punishment, a certain satisfaction was felt in helping to heap up insults upon him. This devotion is by no means confined to learned circles; intellectual men are frequently met with that know nothing of Goethe (if by "knowing" is meant something more than the ability to mention titles and cite quotations); but, on the other hand, the poor sempstress who knows Lenau perfectly, or the mechanic who is well acquainted with the whole of Uhland, is by no means a creature of the imagination.

In their relations with other nations the Germans are fond of a peaceful existence. The German tribes that took part in the migrations of the nations were almost forced by necessity to conquer the Roman Empire; for centuries after that they coveted nothing but Italy, partly because it lay within the idea of the *imperium*, and partly because of a pathetic, sentimental longing for the land of beauty,—a sentiment to be compared with that of a rugged warrior who seeks to win a captivating maiden. At the same time they made many conquests with spiritual weapons, but in actual war they never did more than assert their rights, and frequently failed to do even that. Nevertheless, they never met with the favor of their neighbors either as a nation or as individuals; however, very few nations do stand high in the estimation of the surrounding ones. The German is seldom an object of love as conqueror and administrator, or as immigrant and guest. Alsace has even to-day more admirers of everything French than there are friends of old Prussian rule in Westphalia. The fault lies in the fact that the Germans are prone to neglect form; they are conscientious, thorough, and reliable, but they fail to hold the power of kindness at its true value. Therefore they do not hold together for a long time, even when abroad, and, becoming isolated, they are completely swallowed up in the strange life,—a catastrophe strenuously avoided by the English and the French in foreign countries. Here, too, may be seen the evil effects of exaggerated independence: by accommodating themselves more to the life of the foreign nation they would meet with greater favor; by entering more into the lives of their compatriots in a strange land they could assert themselves more strongly.

The next point for consideration is the opinions of outsiders,—individuals and nations. If merely all the most important pieces of foreign criticism could be collected, we should have a large and interesting addition to the history of culture. Our discussion will, therefore, have to be reduced to a minimum.

The name used for the Germans by their neighbors is in no way characteristic. They are called “the men of battle,” or

“those whose language cannot be understood;” this style of appellation is used for many nations by those surrounding them. Mythological representatives of Germanism—as Cadmus represents Egyptian influence among the Greeks—are unknown to me. The invectives of hostile people are without value.

The first great critical student of the Germans is Tacitus. His account has a tendency to be sentimentally political, but is nevertheless faithful and, in regard to facts, reliable. The Germans are represented in his narration as leading a life of rude simplicity, somewhat as the Samoyeds were regarded by the philanthropists of the last century. Details, however, are not lacking in his description. He makes prominent their want of unity, and hopes—alas, that his wish should have been fulfilled!—for its continuance; he speaks of their reverence for woman, their respect for social organization (princes and priests), the spontaneous character of their divine worship. While other barbarians are inordinately fond of ornament, the Germans, Tacitus declares,—probably not with perfect accuracy,—despise all show. Their isolated mode of life is emphatically referred to: “They spend whole days, almost in a state of nakedness, before the hearth fire.”

Later authorities complain of the savage character of their language and their demeanor. It is a specially noteworthy fact that the Emperor Julian in the fourth century denounced their singing as an intolerable growl, and an Oriental geographer of the tenth century described it in similar terms. Even in this particular there seems to have been a lack of unity, of “*concentus*,” and while every voice followed its own inclination, the chorus degenerated into a roar. All authorities praise the people for courage, contempt of death, fidelity, and love of liberty.

Throughout the Middle Ages there was a complete lack of that wide-reaching glance which comprehends entire nationalities in their essential features. With the introduction of Humanism, the significance of such criticism became manifest. In the opinion of Montaigne, the Germans were fond of drink, quarrelsome, and noisy, but, on the other hand,

brave and faithful. Gradually the former opinion prevails. Walther von der Vogelweide makes the Pope speak of the "stupid Germans," and finally the belief became universal that the Germans were a nation of barbarians, without the power of deliberation or judgment. As long as this opinion was held only of the nation as a whole it was not resented; but when the Jesuit Bouhours maintained that no German could be a *bel esprit* there followed a burst of wrath against Gallic arrogance. Nevertheless, even Voltaire thought of the Germans as Samoyeds, only now the children of nature were reproached with filth and barbarity, where formerly their moral purity and their independent spirit had been admired (Voltaire's "Candide").

Mme. de Staël was the first one to *rediscover* the German soul; her brilliant work, "De l'Allemagne," forms a fitting counterpart to the "Germania" of Tacitus. As with Tacitus, a political tendency and a sentimental bias color the work, but otherwise her observation is clear and just. She praises the sincerity, love of toil, honesty, and depth of the Germans, and criticises their lack of form, their isolation, their want of tact.

Carlyle's criticism was of a more general and more abstract nature; he preached Teutonism as the religion of sincerity and lauded Goethe as the climax of Teutonism. At the same time he did not fail to perceive the weaknesses of the Germans, particularly of the learned professions,—circumstantiality, verbosity, absent-mindedness ("Sartor Resartus"). He fixes quickly and surely upon the German heroes; but he was by no means free from a romantic bias of vision. It may probably be asserted with truth that Mme. de Staël was the first foreigner to *understand* the Germans, Carlyle the first to *love* them.

In Napoleon there was curiously combined a romantic esteem for the nation of Werther with a decided contempt for the nation of ideologists. On him, however, was the greatness of the nation to be proved. The people rose like one man; the great necessity of the time succeeded in bridging over all social, local, and political differences. To the as-

tonishment of all, the nation of dreamers was found to be a great people.

The result was wonderful. Even though Goethe had gained a leading position for German poetry, and Humboldt for science, still the German community as such was only now admitted into the fraternity of great nations. Carlyle's conception of Germany, divested of its prophetic spirit, passed into France, where Renan and Taine now proclaimed German idealism, German scientific method, and German depth of thought. Through the influence of the great war, this opinion again met with a severe shock. While Renan wavers between a conception of the Germans as a nation engaged in dreams and as one occupied with fierce contests, the new generation in France, England, and Italy is beginning to comprehend the German nation in its entirety. A judgment of German character formed at present, though lacking entirely in benevolence, would otherwise not be unjust.

The evidence supplied by German opinions of the Germans can also be given but a hasty glance. At first the tribes treated one another with scorn, unconscious of the bond of unity existing between them. With the spread of Humanism they learnt from the Italians to use well-known events in the lives of famous ancestors as a means of self-laudation. The Reformation found the Germans filled with the consciousness that in their simple honesty they had been the dupes of Rome, denying themselves much for her selfish benefit. Now patriotic invectives against the Germans began to appear. Goethe once made the assertion that the Jews could never have been of much account; their prophets were constantly reprimanding them for their shortcomings. Among the Germans, as well as among the Jews, however, this fact proves the high moral earnestness of the admonishers of the people, and their ability to produce such prophets was a point in favor of the nation.

During the sixteenth century the nation looked upon its love of drinking and brawling with indulgent irony rather than with moral indignation. By the seventeenth century the objects of the prophets' indignant invectives had multiplied:

luxury, immorality, and, most of all, a predilection for every thing foreign, are mercilessly lashed. The satirists Dedekind and Scheidt wrote in a laughing mood of the new national saint, "Le Grobianus," but now Grimmelshausen and Moscherosch, Logau and Gryphius, find their mockery almost choked by tears. After the degeneration which followed the Thirty Years' War, the necessity of a refinement of morals was keenly felt. Leibnitz, Christian Weise, and Thomasius recommended copying French elegance. Gellert, having become imbued with the French spirit, became the tutor for Germany, and a rococo doctrine was thereupon preached.

Under the influence of the victories of Frederick the Great, German national pride was again aroused, and the strong points of Teutonism once more became prominent. Klopstock renewed the Arminius cult of the German Humanists, Lessing struggled against the ascendancy of French poetry. Both of them recognized with deep regret the disintegration of the German nation. Herder attempted to go even more deeply into the German nature, seeking explanations of its character in new sources (ballads, language). Goethe and Schiller were too cosmopolitan in thought to see more in the German nation than a community of individuals making but slow progress towards an ideal. Goethe, especially after his return from Italy, complained of German lack of form, of the isolation of German scholars, of the bungling methods of their artists, of the language itself, changing his point of view entirely from that held by him as Herder's pupil in the "Götz von Berlichingen" period. In this way the greatest man of his time set the bad example of a one-sided, unjust estimate of the German national character. Just as philosophical pessimism had acted towards the idea of God, attacking it with weapons of hate, political pessimism now acted towards the fatherland. Börne is the most passionate and Heine the wittiest among these scolding and mocking critics. Even foreigners scarcely debased the national spirit to the extent to which Germans themselves carried this degradation. The Romanticists, although they continued to praise the Germany of antiquity, had scarcely a better opinion of their own time

than these critics. Germany was continually made to suffer by comparison. Goethe heaped abuse upon it because it was not Italy, Hölderlin because it was not Greece, and Börne because it was not France.

The right of national individuality, apparently, failed to find recognition in the very nation of individualists. As if a great people had not as good a right to its peculiarities as every writer or shoemaker!

Slight tendencies towards a new form of Chauvinism,—represented principally in Jahn, who was also the first to attempt to fix definitely the conception of nationality (*Volksthum*)—are soon checked by powerful criticism. The philosopher Nietzsche may serve as an illustration of this departure, by his change from a prophet of Richard Wagner, so decidedly national in his methods, to the anti-Teutonism and the love of France of a man of 1830.

What do all these critics find objectionable in Germany? There are two principal classes among them: æsthetic and political cavilers. The æsthetic critics reproach the Germans with lack of form, unamiability, gruffness of manner,—in short, barbarity; while the political grumblers complain of undue submissiveness, lack of self-respect, and slavishness of nature. After allowing for the exaggeration natural to honest enthusiasts for beauty or liberty, both these charges will be found to mean the same thing,—overestimation of inward significance, undervaluation of outward form. The German is frequently impolite because he does not allow himself the time to clothe his convictions in an agreeable form, especially as he lays no stress upon the latter; this, however, by no means hinders him from being very sensitive to the actions of others. He frequently sadly disregarded political liberty, because he knew his liberty of *thought* to be safe from attack. These are faults, it is true, but the untiring exertions of the Germans are busy at the task of overcoming them. Form is beginning to be observed (“Rembrandt als Erzieher”), a decided liberality in political opinions is developing. Besides, faultless perfection can be expected here as little as anywhere else. In this connection may be quoted the saying of one of the best repre-

sentatives of the German character: concerning the search for truth, Lessing says, "Possession is meant for God alone; we must be content with striving."

In this discussion, we, too, have had to content ourselves with an *attempt* at covering the subject. Phenomena of importance in a study of national psychology have merely been referred to and received no more than passing mention. The study of national psychology was, indeed, first pursued by German scholars. Herder, Humboldt, Lazarus, Steinthal, laid the foundation on which the structure of an exact science of nationality was to be raised. It was but natural that the psychological bent of the German mind—always one of its chief characteristics—should incline the nation towards the consideration of the individuality of the community. In psychological insight the Germans far surpassed the Romance nations, who always identified a character with a particular quality. In like manner, the German study of national psychology stood far in advance of the naïve characterization by epithets common in former times,—“the faithless Phœnician,” “the cunning Armenian.”

To conclude this hasty enumeration of typical features with a generalization would, therefore, be particularly unsuitable. Some general principle might perhaps be deduced, but little would be gained thereby. The national individuality is too wide and too significant to be contained in a phrase, a representation, or a formula. The saying “By their fruits ye shall know them” may most aptly be applied here. A deeply significant language, a great mythology, a magnificent collection of poetry, and a history rich in great events testify to the soul of the German people; through these media it will continue to prove its existence in the future. For centuries to come, may the German nation continue to be an invaluable and honorable member of the family of nations and develop the essential features of the national character!

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